
Brother Orr's

MASONIC ADDRESS.

A

HISTORY OF FREE MASONRY;

AND THE

DUTIES INCUMBENT ON THE CRAFT;

CONSIDERED IN A

DISCOURSE

BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF

Fellowship Lodge,

IN

BRIDGEWATER, AT THEIR FIRST REGULAR MEETING,

JUNE 30th, A. L. 5797.

BY HECTOR ORR, R. W. M. *elect.*

||

"Interdum vulgus rectum videt; est ubi peccat."

BOSTON:

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1798.



TO THOSE OF THE
FRATERNITY

WHO HAVE IN THEIR POSSESSION

THE BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS

OF THE

Grand Lodge of Massachusetts,

THIS PUBLICATION

DEMANDS AN APOLOGY.

IT HAS NO PRETENSIONS TO ORIGINALITY ;

AND ITS ONLY JUSTIFICATION

IS THE DESIRE OF OUR

BRETHREN

FOR MASONIC HISTORICAL INFORMATION

WHO CANNOT WELL AFFORD THE EXPENSE OF PURCHASING,

OR THE TROUBLE OF PERUSING,

THAT LARGE, THOUGH INSTRUCTIVE, VOLUME.

THE

CANDID HEARING AND KIND RECEPTION

GIVEN TO THIS DISCOURSE IN THE DELIVERY

DEMANDS A RENEWED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OF THE

FLATTERING ATTENTION AND PARTIALITY

OF THE

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL OFFICERS

AND

BELOVED BRETHREN,

OF

Fellowship Lodge

TO WHOM,

IN TESTIMONY OF ESTEEM,

IT IS NOW

AFFECTIONATELY

Inscribed and Dedicated.

MASONIC ADDRESS.

OFFICERS AND BRETHREN OF THE LODGE,

UPON the present joyous, though solemn occasion, when convened for the first time in regular lodge, the propriety of devoting a few moments to *a brief delineation of the HISTORY of FREE MASONRY*, and an equal proportion of time to the contemplation of *the DUTIES incumbent upon the Craft*, will be readily acknowledged. If the thoughts here suggested are *received* with the same satisfaction they were *conceived*, neither the hours that passed in the composition, nor the time elapsed in the delivery, will be entirely mispent.

To trace the origin of this Institution back to the early ages of society, of which no authentic documents have been preserved, is not

my present design. Tradition is not of sufficiently established reputation to sanction proceedings in an age disgraced with fables and fictions, however well corroborated by the testimony of modern historians. And such is the ingenuity of man, with a few *facts* and as many disconnected hints and unsupported conjectures, he builds a most connected and probable system, that induces us to distrust or disbelieve every thing that does not bring with it the signet of authority. But from evidences known only to the Fraternity, there is no doubt but what Masonry originated, like other humane and benevolent institutions, in the social affections, which attract individuals of the same kind, and dispose them to form more extended connexions: and its object was the establishment and propagation of that system of *Divine Revelation*, which is superior to the dictates of reason, and the light of nature:—to meliorate the human condition in an age of barbarism and hostilities;—and to cultivate and improve those arts and sciences, which embellish life, and civilize man.

HAVING its foundation in “the best affections of the human heart,” and the *end* proposed the most important and beneficial that ever engaged the attention of man, its failure or success must alone depend upon the execution of the *means*.

THE principles of Masonry being coeval with *light*, it has assumed the appellation of *antient*; and from its antiquity and laudable purposes, the dignified title of *honourable* has been justly bestowed.

THOUGH this noble and beautiful science was cultivated in Assyria, Judea, Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome and Italy, where excellent specimens of human ingenuity were to be found; still I reluctantly recur to demolished obelisks and pyramids, Gothick piles or the rubbish of antient architecture to discover the rise of so amiable an institution. Princes and Saints might have conceived the sublime ideas of erecting temples and churches, but something more than the mere *erection* must have been contemplated by the

founders of Free Masonry. Our solemn *charges* and *addresses*, and the devout *ceremonies* of initiation, bear evident and undeniable testimony of these conjectures.

IN an age when superstition had debased the human intellect, when learning was proscribed, the literati persecuted, and the most enormous abuses were committed under cover of the venerable name of religion ; martyrdom would be the perquisite of virtue. Under such circumstances, it is easy to conceive, considering the immediate connexion between geometry and architecture, and that the whole system of morality admits of geometrical demonstration, that the few espoused to truth should form a moral and religious institution under the symbol of a building. The members of this faithful Fraternity, having made themselves a *name* and invented a *sign*,¹ journeyed into different countries of the East, where they caused to be erected temples or lodges, in which they might assemble at stated seasons, and inculcate the tenets of their profession. Upon their first arrival it is probable their piety and zeal directed their attention

to the building of a temple ; and, appearing in the character and habiliment of architects, they might elude the persecution of those, who “ *changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped, and served the creature more than the Creator.*”

THE curious may be delighted with a description of superb edifices, noble statues, magnificent castles and other works of art, which were the pride of the antients² ; but, in the present epoch, they form no part of the history of Masonry. If ever it was *Operative*, those who wish for a more accurate knowledge of its progress in that character, I must refer to our most excellent book of CONSTITUTIONS, which has preserved every thing useful, entertaining or instructing upon that subject.

CONSIDERING Free Masonry as a science ; its progress or decline may be distinctly traced, by attending to the state of literature, through successive periods of time, with which it kept pace. When learning found patrons and the virtuoso protection, men eminent in the arts

and sciences presided over the Craft, and the Fraternity assumed a rank of respectability; that could only be sullied by Gothic ignorance, or the most degrading corruption.

I. THE æra of the commencement of Masonry in ENGLAND³ was before the invasion of the Romans, but it received an additional lustre upon their arrival, and was encouraged by Cæsar and several Roman generals, though they have not left us upon record any authentic account of the usages and customs, which prevailed in their assemblies.

UNDER the auspices of the Emperor Carausius, the business of the Fraternity became more regularly conducted, and was in a flourishing condition till the departure of the Romans from Britain; when the irruptions of the Picts and Scots began their depredations upon the archives of the learned, and their conquerors, the Saxons, compleated the devastation. During this period of wretchedness, and the Heptarchy, the Craft found but little encouragement, but it soon revived; and some of the most dignified personages of

the realm were initiated into the order and presided over the Fraternity.

IN the reign of Henry VI, that young prince, its career of prosperity was checked by the proceeding in parliament to abolish the society⁴. The severity of this hasty act failed in the execution, and the persecuted brethren were more firmly rivited to the institution.

DURING the reign of Edward V, and Richard III, it declined ; but upon the accession of Henry VII, it found new encouragement, and continued without interruption, until the reign of Elizabeth, who, “ hearing that the Masons were in possession of secrets, which they would not reveal, and being jealous of all secret assemblies, sent an armed force with intent to break up their annual Grand Lodges.” This design was happily frustrated, and she afterwards became as great admirer of their knowledge and skill, as the Queen of Sheba was of the wisdom of Solomon.

THE society continued to enjoy an uninterrupted tranquillity until the breaking out of the civil wars, which retarded its progress in England, till after the restoration, when it revived under the patronage of Charles II. After an elapse of upwards of twenty years, when King James II succeeded to the throne, the Fraternity were much neglected, and continued in a declining state for many years. On the accession of George I, the society adopted a variety of regulations, and effectually checked future innovations. From that period the Craft have been universally respected in England, and the business of Masonry diligently executed by gentlemen of erudition and respectability.

II. PREVIOUS to the reign of Macbeth, A. D. 1057, Masonry was scarcely known in SCOTLAND^s; but under King James I, who presided as the Royal Grand Master, learning found a patron, and “the Brethren of the *mystic* tie” became more numerous, and the benign influence of the institution spread through the country. So respectable is the order in that kingdom, that, in the

course of thirty years, not less than sixteen Earls, besides Lords and Barons have been proclaimed Grand Masters, and placed in the chair.

III. IN IRELAND, Masonry found but little encouragement previous to the commencement of the present century. And nothing was regularly transacted by the Fraternity, until A. D. 1730, when *James King*, lord Viscount Kingston, was chosen Grand Master.

IV. AFTER Masonry had been successfully cultivated in the greater part of Europe and Asia, and in some of the more informed kingdoms of Africa: progressing with civilization, it reached at length this western world. In the christian era, 1733, ST. JOHN'S Grand Lodge was established in Boston under the jurisdiction of the Grand Master of England, and the Right Worshipful Henry Price was appointed Provincial Grand Master.

SAINT ANDREW'S Lodge, No. 83, A. D. 1755, received a dispensation from the Grand

Lodge of Scotland, appointing *Joseph Warren* to be Grand Master of Masons in Boston, New England, and within one hundred miles of the same.

A COALITION was compleated between these two Grand Lodges, A. D. 1792, in all that harmony and unanimity, which ought to characterise the members of the Fraternity.

NOTWITHSTANDING the various revolutions, which have suddenly extinguished, or laid the most famous kingdoms and empires in ruins ; and amid the different alterations of the forms of government, and continual changes of customs and manners, Masonry has known but a few deviations from its ancient establishment, and these “ adapting it to the improving state of society.”

FROM this general and laconic sketch of *the HISTORY of Free Masonry*, we turn to the consideration of those DUTIES it inculcates. Here opens a field so extensive that the most excursive fancy may unweariedly soar to cull a flower for the *head*, that if

brought home to the bosom will improve the heart.

THE *altar* of Masonry around which we are assembled is concealed with an impervious veil from the prying eye of curiosity ; it is wholly secure from political dissensions, ecclesiastic decrivals, libertine intrigues, the unhallowed footsteps of atheism and the wanton smiles of infidelity. Here we have cemented our friendship by the “ firm bonds of affectionate brotherly love and truth,” and pledged ourselves to preserve this antient and venerable fabric, which is supported by two august and immoveable pillars, *piety* towards God the Supreme Architect and *love* to mankind. Our system recommends peace and harmony, charity and benevolence, a love of the public weal, submission to the laws and to men in authority, and inspires all the virtues, which are essential to the existence of society. It inculcates silence and secrecy, cheerfulness, mirth, temperance, economy, and the study of the liberal arts. REVELATION is a *light* to our path, a *rule* of our *faith*, the pillar that supports our *hope*, the *cement* of love,

and the heart of *charity*. It has *wisdom* to illuminate the mind, gives *strength* to support our belief, and *beauty* to adorn our lives. The true Mason with *this* before him is taught to to *work* as not to *labour in vain*, nor *spend his strength for nought* ; to *square* his actions by the rule of equity ; to keep within the *compass* of the Divine commands ; and to bring down high looks and vain imaginations to the *level* of christian meekness. From hence we deduce the three great and principal duties of *natural religion*, from which all the smaller branches are naturally derived, and which, as Masons, we are bound to obey.

THE SUPREME ARCHITECT, who is made manifest in his works and the necessity of things, we are to honour, esteem and reverence. His *knowledge* and *wisdom*, which are displayed in the wonderful contrivance and happy arrangement of every part of the material creation, from the meanest pebble upon earth up to the brightest star in the firmament of heaven, and bear undeniable *signs* of the infinitely accurate skill of the Artificer, command our admiration. His *omnipresence*

imposes a perpetual awful regard. His *omnipotence* commands our veneration. His *justice* demands our fear. His *mercy* encourages our hopes. His *goodness* excites our love. His *veracity* secures our trust and confidence ; and his daily *bounties* conciliate esteem and awaken our gratitude.

OUR duty to our NEIGHBOUR consists in acting upon the *square* ; which is a rule of equity and love, that teaches us to exact no more, than what could reasonably be expected, in similar circumstances, to be exacted of us ; and to direct our endeavours, by an universal benevolence, to promote the welfare and felicity of mankind. Iniquity in action is falsity in speculation ; and the absurdity of the one is equal to the unreasonableness of the other. The *corner-stone* of this mysterious fabric is mutual love and benevolence, which places all the species upon the same honourable *level*, possessing the same wants and desires, with the same demand for protection and assistance, and equally capacitated for the enjoyments and advantages of society⁶. By practising justice, equity, charity,

and truth ; seeking reconciliation ; suffering injuries with patience, and forgiving trespasses ; we compleat the whole duty we owe our fellow creatures.

THE last great duty respect, OURSELVES, and we fulfil it by keeping within *compass* ; by preserving our own lives and faculties ; avoiding intemperance and excesses ; governing our passions, and restraining our appetites ; and by resisting temptations, that may lead to irregularities derogatory to human nature, and unbecoming our laudable profession.

IN point of RELIGION, Masonry is superior to other institutions. It embraces every denomination of professors, the Jew, the Mahometan, the Protestant and Quaker, without giving offence to either. By uniting all hearts, the harmony of the lodge can never be interrupted by invidious comparisons of the merit of our respective creeds or the right or wrong of our several modes and ceremonies of worship. The greatest possible union is to pervade these peaceful walls ; and the

little disagreements in life to give way to christian catholicism, and universal philanthropy. Hypocrisy, heresy, and idolatry are uncharitable terms not to be found in the masonic vocabulary.

MASONRY gives no preference to either of the established forms of government in the universe. That which is best adapted to the character of the people and the extent of territory is best. It has nothing in its nature repugnant to good order and the salutary laws of the land. It acknowledges the necessity of government, admires the *wisdom* of its contrivance, the *beauty* of its designs, and the *strength* it gives. It imposes upon its votaries obedience to the magistrate, and submission to the laws : discountenances cabals, factions and conspiracies, and reprobates the traitor with his treason and the contemptible demagogue with his declamations and anarchy. It inspires peace, that great palladium of political happiness, and receives indiscriminately to its affectionate embraces the good and worthy of every party ; apologises for their zeal, and teaches them to forget or suf-

pend their hatred, and malice. Let us then resolutely endeavour, in our several stations in life, to give duration and permanency to the government under which we live, and cultivate a friendly intercourse with every nation upon earth.

ENDEAVOUR, by an uniformly amiable deportment in life, an undissembled profession of truth, an undeviating practice of virtue, by the purity of our conversation, the honesty of our dealings, and by an unequivocal punctuality in the execution of our engagements, to wipe away all unfavourable impressions the world may have imbibed against us. The wounds, which the institution has received by the admission of bad men, let us heal with a lenient restorative ; rather extenuating the fault than condemning the inflicter ; and avoid making it bleed afresh by our own scarifications and vesicatories.

IN a society, which embraces in its selection every denomination of virtuous citizens, there will be undoubtedly a few unworthy

of its honours. By permitting no less the poor than the rich ; the low than the exalted, the gay, the young and unexperienced, than the sedate, the aged and wise ; to participate in its exhilarating pleasures and advantages, there will be impositions and abuses. If the gravity of philosophy, the persuasive eloquence of the pulpit, or even religion itself are unable to render men impeccable, it will not be expected here. We are never to receive into our number the exiled of any country, nor the disgraced and expelled of any society. But those we do accept are entitled to all the light we can impart, and having received our precepts, it is theirs to reduce them to practice.

IN vain do we lavish encomiums upon the benevolent design and friendly nature of the institution, its salutary influence, its honourable antiquity, and its marvellously wise regulations, when our lives give the lie to our pretensions. Unsuccessful will prove every attempt to conciliate the esteem of the world, and to convince them of its beneficial

effects, when there is not a specimen to be produced *without* the walls of the Lodge. Masonry has but little that is ostensible to recommend it to the notice of mankind, and much to prejudice them against it. Our meetings, which court the darkness of the night and an affected concealment, give an appearance of some dark design, some deep laid plot or tremendous conspiracy against the state. The mystery that envelopes our proceeding rather tends to stagger the belief, and confirm the worst conjectures, than to convince a reasonable mind. The undiscoverable *secrets*, which have first awakened and then misled the curiosity of the inquisitive, which are dearer than life, and which ebriety can never reveal⁸, mark the society down among the ignorant and vulgar for a great deception, and its members for jugglers and impostors. The unfriendly traditions of the mode of making a Mason, which have been faithfully transmitted, industriously propagated and crammed down the throats of the credulous, excite alarm, and strengthen the belief of our pagan rituals and the most unrelenting inhumanity.

THE nature of our institution being but little understood in this place, its novelty will make bankrupts of our wits, revive the most extravagant prejudices superstition can invent, and summon the motley phalanx of spleen, raillery and invectives, to oppose and defeat our design. Every thing that is bad will be said of us ; slanders will traduce our fairest characters, and calumny will blacken our brightest virtues. Ours is the arduous task to oppose with a manly firmness and complacency this torrent of malevolence and scurrility, by soothing the irascible, and comforting rather than irritating the weak. Let us rather do honour to the institution by our good works than seek it in the eclat of the world.

BRETHREN OF THE LODGE, this eve commences our labour in that part of the temple assigned us. Let us set forward with resolution to act well our part ; take with us none that we shall reluctantly salute in public ; none that we cannot embrace with cordiality ; none whose unfaithful breasts mock all confidence and fidelity ; none whose hearts reluctantly

open to the distresses of an indigent brother, whose bosoms are shrouded in inhumanity, and in whose icy veins never flowed the milk of human kindness. It is impossible to be too scrupulously attentive or too cautious of whom we permit to participate in our friendship, and to share the equal honours and emoluments of the society. Union is our bulwark, and *merit* ought always to have a decided preference to *numbers*, who add nothing to our strength, but diminish the ratio of our friendship.

BENEVOLENCE and CHARITY, congenial suns in the masonic hemisphere, warm and invigorate all that enjoy their prolific beams. Eclipse not their radiance by the sickly vapours of unfeeling parsimony, or the lowering clouds of cruelty and scorn. Let not the warmth they impart be extinguished by a cold neglect or an unthinking indifference, that palls all hearts. But let our economy, our prudence, and frugality, be adequate to every exigency, and support our liberality ; that we may avoid the imputation of profusion on one hand, and that of a niggardly closeness on the other.

SHUT the doors of the Lodge against the *avaricious*, whose minds are absorbed in their clinking god, and refuse even a scanty pittance to the poor. Refuse admittance to *restless ambition* which, despising our humble though honourable *level*, aspires to be highest : to the *sensualist* who drowns his understanding in the intoxicating bowl and at the banquet : to the Atheist who stifles conviction, and to the *unworthy* of every description : against all such be the doors of Masonry shut ! that the Lodge, which is consecrated ground may be free from pollution ; and in it never be heard the *hammer* of contention nor the *axe* of division. Let PEACE, HARMONY, and LOVE pay their constant and friendly visits to this tranquil abode, and impart their kindly influence to every mind.

CAUTION points you to the urn of a Sampson, whose unfaithful breast revealed the very *secret* of his existence. Let us profit by the example, and by preserving inviolable the few we possess rise superior to the world⁹, and maintain its friendship. But the moment our arcana are disclosed, the world rises superior to us, turns an irreconcilable foe, and

triumphs in our destruction. Exercise a generous compassion and a most delicate tenderness to the feelings and reputation of those whom, having applied, we *refuse*. Let that *denial* be a *secret*, that our disapprobation may never be converted into censure and disgrace by mankind.

CARRY into the *world* that truth and benevolence, that charity and harmony, and those precepts and maxims, which are so zealously inculcated *here* ; that *all the world may be a Lodge*, and we be always *Masons*¹⁰. Then might we emphatically call upon mankind to “ *behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity and love.* ” And they in rapture at the vision exclaim in the language of the Psalmist that “ *it is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments ; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion ; for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.* ”

I DISMISS YOU, BRETHREN, to your homes and retirement, “to mix again with the world” and to pursue the employments of your several occupations in life. Bear with you my best wishes for your happiness and prosperity, amid every scene and all the concerns that await you in public and in private. I conclude by recommending to your practice *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on and EXCEL IN THESE THINGS.*”

N O T E S.

NOTE FIRST. PAGE 10.

GEN. XI. 4. *And let us make us a NAME.* “Both the Septuagint and Vulgate render this expression a little differently from our translation. According to their version it is *let us make us a NAME before that we be dispersed.* If we attend to the different interpretations that the word *שֵׁם* *schem* will bear, it is easy to render the passage intelligible. The word signifies a *mark*, a *sign*, and a *name*. Interpreters, by fixing on this last signification, have rendered the passage somewhat obscure; but by taking it in the sense of a *mark* or *sign*, it becomes intelligible. Besides the analogy of languages confirms this interpretation. The Greek words *σημα*, *σημειον*, are derived from the Hebrew *שֵׁם* *schem.*” Vid. Book of Constitutions. Perizon. Origin. Babyl. l. cx. p. 168. cxi. p. 193. cxii. p. 223.

NOTE SECOND. PAGE 11.

—“*Argentum, et marmor vetus, zraque, et artes
Suspice; cum gemmis Tyrios mirare colores.*”

QUIN. HOR. FLAC. Epis. lib. I. 4.

NOTE THIRD. PAGE 12.

VID. BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS, from which ingenious work, the following History of Masonry in *England, Scotland, Ireland, and America*, is selected and epitomised.

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NOTE FOURTH. PAGE 13.

—“ hath ordained and established that they that cause such chapters and congregations to be assembled and holden if they thereof be convicted, shall be judged for felons : And that the other masons, that come to such chapters, be punished by imprisonment, and make fine and rancome at the king's will.”

3 Hen. vi. cap. 1. A. D. 1425.

NOTE FIFTH. PAGE 14.

“ The first regular Grand Lodge that was erected in Scotland, was in the parish of *Kilwinning* at the beginning of the 12th century. King JAMES I. patronized this lodge, and presided as Grand Master ;—After him the Grand Master was to be a man nobly born, or a clergyman of high rank and character ; till the reign of King JAMES II. who conferred the office of Grand Master on the Earl of ORKNEY, and Baron of ROSLIN, in whose family the office was made hereditary by the King.”

Rev. Mr. T. Pollock's History of KILWINNING, in SINCLAIR'S Statistical account of SCOTLAND. Vol. ii. page 170.

NOTE SIXTH. PAGE 19.

“ Nihil est unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus. Quod nisi depravatio, &c. ; sui nemo ipse tam similis esset, quam omnes sunt omnium.”

CIC. *de Legib. lib. i.*

NOTE SEVENTH. PAGE 21.

“ Should it be asked which government is best ? I would answer, that every species of government is not equally proper for every nation, and that, in this point, we must have a regard to the humour and character of the people, and to the extent of the country.” *BURLAMAQUI, principles, Nat. and pol. law. 2 vol. part ii. cha. ii. S. xlv. p. 97.*

NOTE EIGHT. PAGE 24

“Quid non ebrietas designat? Opera recludit.”
HON. lib. i. epigr. v. l. 16

NOTE NINTH. PAGE 27

Est et fidei tanta silentio

Mercēs : vetabo, qui cereris sacrum

Vulgarit arcanae, sub iisdem

Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum

Solvat phaselum.

IDEM. lib. iii. oda iii.

NOTE TENTH. PAGE 28.

————— Ne fidas inter amicos

Sit, qui dicta foras eliminat ; ut coeat par,

Jungaturque pari.

IDEM. lib. i. epigr. v.

